

# BUILDING A EUROPE FOR AND WITH CHILDREN



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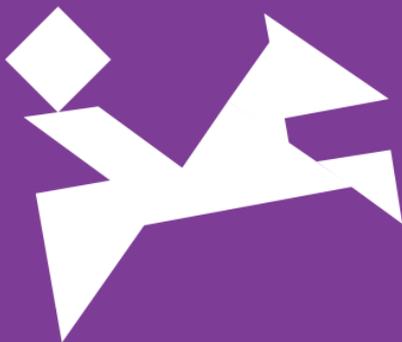
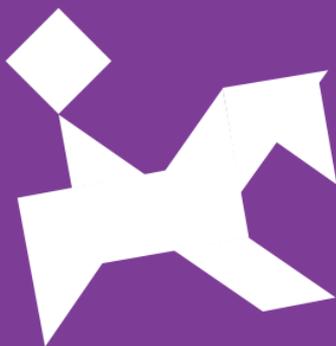
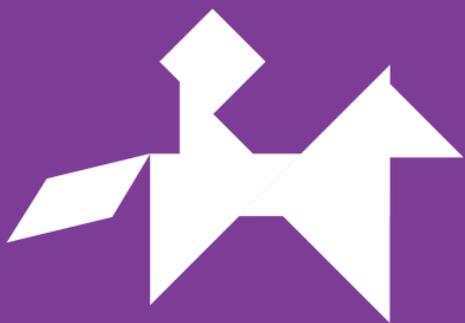
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SEVEN GOOD REASONS FOR

BUILDING  
A EUROPE  
FOR AND WITH  
CHILDREN



# 1. Children are not mini-human beings with mini-human rights

Children have rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises children as holders of many essential rights. In Europe, children's fundamental rights are further protected by the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter. Just a few examples of these are: the right to life, the right not to be submitted to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, protection against forced labour or slavery, respect for private and family life, the right to protection from danger and the right to education.



*"Building a Europe for and with children", a Council of Europe programme, seeks to ensure respect for children's rights throughout all countries in Europe.*



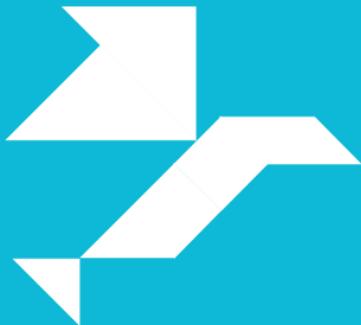
## 2. Children are vulnerable.

### They need more protection, not less

Children are victims of many forms of violence. Children are used as slaves, as soldiers, as workers. Children are neglected, abused, mutilated, killed. This happens in the street, at school, in hospitals, on the Internet, in detention centres, in the media, at home and in other places where children are supposed to be safe. Children are vulnerable and depend on adults for most things. They cannot defend themselves and their voices are the last to be heard. Special measures need to be taken to counteract children's vulnerability.



*"Building a Europe for and with children" aims to eradicate all forms of violence against children. It is based on the four Ps: protection of children, prevention of violence, prosecution of criminals and participation of children. The programme pays special attention to particularly vulnerable children: children with disabilities, children living in poverty and children being raised without parental care.*

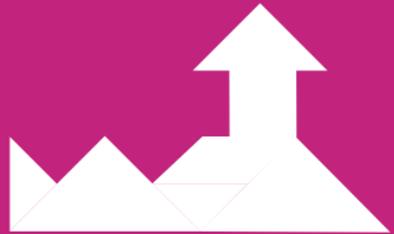


### 3. No violence against children is justifiable

In many European countries, society tolerates and even approves some recurrent forms of violence against children, in particular those inflicted in the family setting. However, no tradition, religion, belief, economic situation or “educational” method can ever justify hitting, smacking, spanking, mutilating, abusing, humiliating, or any other practice that violates children’s dignity. Europe must become a continent where practices such as corporal punishment (whether at home, at school or in institutions) no longer exist.



*“Building a Europe for and with children” is campaigning to eradicate all forms of violence against children, focusing in particular on awareness-raising, education, training and capacity-building to promote a culture of non-violence and reach a zero level of tolerance.*



## 4. All violence against children can be prevented

Most cases of violence against children remain invisible. This is because children are afraid to speak up and when they do, adults do not always follow up on reported cases adequately. A lack of data and research makes it difficult for governments to set up effective prevention policies.

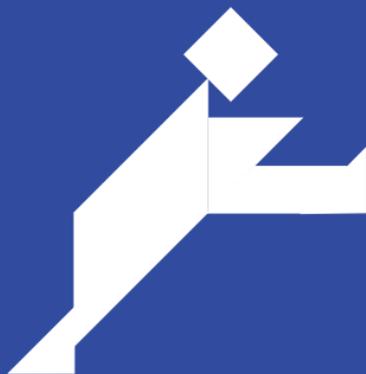
 *"Building a Europe for and with children" aims to help countries set up strategies for the prevention of violence against children. The programme will work to improve systems that facilitate reporting through child-friendly services, support to families and early identification and professional documentation of cases. It seeks to provide authorities and professionals with the ability to respond quickly and adequately to reported violence. Special efforts are being made to eradicate sexual abuse and the exploitation of children.*



## 5. Protecting children calls for a strategic approach

The complexity and importance of the issues at stake and the number of actors involved call for a strategic approach. Countries must identify short-term and long-term objectives, review their legislative and institutional frameworks and launch participatory processes likely to involve all stakeholders and mobilise all resources available.

 *"Building a Europe for and with children" intends to help states consolidate or develop national strategies for the protection of children's rights. The programme also helps states design comprehensive, coherent and accessible legal frameworks. It proposes models for effective institutional frameworks and promotes the launching of participatory processes for the design and implementation of national policies.*



## 6. Children's rights concern us all

Children's rights should inform decisions by all authorities and institutions. All professionals, in particular those in daily contact with children (including health and social workers, teachers, lawyers, judges, journalists, the police), individuals (notably parents) and the business sector share responsibility for children's welfare. The role played by independent institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should be fully recognised and supported.

Children's rights concern first and foremost children themselves. But few children know what their rights even are or much less how to exercise them. Children need to have access to information about their rights and should be allowed and encouraged to participate in decision-making processes affecting their lives.



*"Building a Europe for and with children" aims to mobilise all sectors of society, make them aware of their specific responsibilities and strengthen their capacity to prevent violence and protect children. The programme also aims to improve children's access to information and develop methods and tools to achieve meaningful children's participation at all levels: local, regional and national.*

A EUROPE

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CHILDREN

## 7. Children's rights make Europe grow

Thanks to international co-operation, the situation of children has greatly improved. International co-operation is essential when it comes to resolving problems affecting many countries throughout Europe and in fighting trans-border crime and protecting its victims. Cyber-criminals and traffickers in human beings often benefit from a lack of international co-operation.

The Council of Europe was founded in 1949 to build Europe upon three main pillars: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This mandate implies that all Council of Europe member states (today 47) should cooperate and commit themselves to building a space where children feel safe, happy and at home.



*"Building a Europe for and with children" is making the most out of international co-operation. It combines important tools such as standard setting, monitoring, policy development, technical assistance and awareness-raising, putting them to the service of children's rights. The Council of Europe works in partnership with other important players in Europe, such as the European Union and Unicef, and intends to ensure appropriate follow-up to the recommendations of the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children.*



## **"Building a Europe for and with children": work in progress**

Of all intergovernmental organisations in Europe, the Council of Europe is in the best position to address effectively the issue of children's rights. It can:

1. combine highly effective tools: standard setting – monitoring – policy development – co-operation and assistance programmes – outreach (education, training and communication);
2. easily mobilise four main actors (the four pillars): governments, parliamentarians, local authorities and NGOs.

All Council of Europe bodies, institutions and major administrative entities share the programme's vision and are already contributing to meeting its objectives. This "team work" at the organisation level is inspired by an inter-secretariat Task Force (where all relevant Council of Europe secretariats are represented) and a programme co-ordination unit (attached to the secretariat of the Directorate General of Social Cohesion).

The following are examples of on-going activities at the Council of Europe.

## *1. Standard setting*

The Council of Europe's most important asset is probably its capacity to set standards. This is thanks to the particularly dynamic participation of its bodies and institutions in this work. Amongst the various legal texts under preparation which concern children are:

- a recommendation on the participation of young people from minorities;
- a recommendation containing European rules for juvenile offenders deprived of their liberty or subject to community sanctions or measures;
- a revised European Convention on Adoption (to be adopted in 2008);
- a Council of Europe charter on citizenship and human rights education.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe also adopts recommendations, resolutions and opinions concerning children's rights. The following reports are under preparation in its committees and may lead to the adoption of important texts:

- report on promoting the involvement of children in decisions concerning them;
- report on child and teenage suicide in Europe: a serious public health issue;

- report on preventing the first form of violence against children: abandonment at birth;
- report on the abduction and confinement of women and girls motivated by practices contrary to human rights;
- feminicides;
- the promotion of Internet and online media services appropriate for minors;
- guaranteeing a right to schooling for children with illness or disabilities.

## ***II. Monitoring***

Monitoring the compliance of member states with human rights standards is of the highest importance. The Council of Europe's statutory bodies (the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers) have established various monitoring systems (country-based, thematic or treaty-based). Case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the decisions and conclusions adopted by the European Committee of Social Rights are outstanding examples in this field.

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, an independent institution, greatly contributes to assessing the situation through individual country visits. The Commissioner's reports and activities have increasingly highlighted children's rights issues.

Monitoring bodies are encouraged to pay particular attention to violence against children. The programme “Building a Europe for and with children” is setting up a systematic review of decisions, reports and recommendations concerning children’s rights.

### ***III. Policy development***

The Council of Europe has cumulated impressive expertise in the field of policy development. Steering committees composed of government representatives and of observers from NGOs (the Organisation’s “fourth pillar”) and other intergovernmental organisations undertake the bulk of this work. They are the architects of the Council of Europe’s sectoral policies. Steering committees in the fields of legal co-operation, human rights, social cohesion, culture, education and youth have all placed children’s rights issues on their agendas, including:

- access to education by Roma children;
- education for democratic citizenship and human rights education;
- the rights of children with disabilities;
- the rights of children in institutions;
- integration of migrants’ children;

- children's participation: developing methods, networks and tools, paying particular attention to child victims of exclusion (migrant children, street children, children in institutions, children with disabilities, etc.);
- reviewing national youth policies, in connection with child policies;
- analysing legal and institutional frameworks at national and local level levels, identifying best practices and drawing up models for national strategies to protect children's rights;
- analysing national and local prevention policies, identifying best practices and drawing up models for the prevention of violence at national and local levels;
- developing family policies in the best interests of children and promoting positive parenting;
- designing a set of tools for decision makers on citizenship and human rights education.

#### ***IV. Co-operation and assistance***

Upon request, the Council of Europe will co-operate with countries on an individual basis, assisting them with legal reform, policy and institutional framework design, and training for professionals.

## ***V. Outreach – communication, education and training***

Standards and policies need to be accompanied by communication, education and training strategies. Current activities include:

- developing a website on children's rights;
- developing an online database on case law of the European Court of Human Rights relevant to children;
- developing child-friendly communication (web and printed material);
- publishing a training pack on reducing violence in schools;
- publishing a child/youth-friendly version of the Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life;
- communication initiatives on specific issues, such as sexual violence, corporal punishment, violence in schools;
- developing further Through the Wild Web Woods (e-game on Internet safety) by integrating human rights topics;
- publishing texts for lawyers on children's human rights and texts on Council of Europe actions to end violence against children;

Promoting *Compasito* (a manual for human rights education for children) through training and publication in other languages;

- developing further training courses on human rights;
- organising events and campaigns at national and international level.



# The Council of Europe and children's rights

## MAIN LEGAL TEXTS<sup>1</sup>

### *I. Conventions*

#### *Core conventions*

- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950)
- European Social Charter (1961)
- Revised European Social Charter (1996)
- Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing for a System of Collective Complaints (1995)
- European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987)

#### *Other conventions*

- Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007)
- Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005)

1. Consult <[www.coe.int/children](http://www.coe.int/children)> for regular updates on legal texts.

- Convention on Contact concerning Children (2003)
- Convention on Cybercrime (2001)
- European Convention on Nationality (1997)
- European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (1996)
- European Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions concerning Custody of Children and on the Restoration of Custody of Children (1980)
- European Convention on the Legal Status of Children born out of Wedlock (1975)
- European Convention on the Adoption of Children (1967)

## ***II. Recommendations, resolutions and declarations from the Committee of Ministers (1990-2008)***

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)9 on life projects for unaccompanied migrant minors
- Recommendation Rec(2006)19 on policy to support positive parenting
- Recommendation Rec(2006)12 on empowering children in the new information and communications environment
- Recommendation Rec(2006)5 on the Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society: improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2014
- Recommendation Rec(2006)1 on the role of national youth councils in youth policy development

- Recommendation Rec(2005)5 on the rights of children living in residential institutions
- Recommendation Rec(2004)13 on the participation of young people in local and regional life
- Recommendation Rec(2003)20 concerning new ways of dealing with juvenile delinquency and the role of juvenile justice
- Recommendation Rec(2002)8 on child day-care
- Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence
- Recommendation Rec(2001)16 on the protection of children against sexual exploitation
- Recommendation Rec(2001)10 on the European Code of Police Ethics
- Recommendation Rec(2000)11 on action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation
- Recommendation No. R(98)8 on children's participation in family and social life
- Recommendation No. R(97)19 on the portrayal of violence in the electronic media
- Recommendation No. R(97)13 concerning intimidation of witnesses and the rights of defence
- Recommendation No. R(94)14 on coherent and integrated family policies
- Recommendation No. R(93)2 on the medico-social aspects of child abuse
- Recommendation No. R(91)11 on sexual exploitation, pornography and prostitution of and trafficking in, children and young adults

- Recommendation No. R(91)9 on emergency measures in family matters
- Recommendation No. R(90)2 on social measures concerning violence in the family
- Resolution ResAP(2005)1 on safeguarding adults and children with disabilities against abuse



- Declaration on protecting the dignity, security and privacy of children on the Internet (2008)

### ***III. Recommendations and resolutions from the Parliamentary Assembly (1990-2008)***

- Recommendation 1828 (2008): Disappearance of newborn babies for illegal adoption in Europe
- Recommendation 1815 (2007): Prostitution – Which stance to take?
- Recommendation 1778 (2007): Child victims : stamping out all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse
- Recommendation 1703 (2005) on protection and assistance for separated children seeking asylum
- Recommendation 1698 (2005) on the rights of children in institutions: follow up to Recommendation 1601 (2003) of the Parliamentary Assembly
- Recommendation 1666 (2004) on a Europe-wide ban on corporal punishment of children

- Recommendation 1596 (2003) on the situation of young migrants in Europe
- Recommendation 1632 (2003) on teenagers in distress: a social and health-based approach to youth malaise
- Recommendation 1601 (2003) on improving the lot of abandoned children in institutions
- Recommendation 1561 (2002) on social measures for children of war in South-Eastern Europe
- Recommendation 1555 (2002) on the image of women in the media
- Recommendation 1551 (2002) on building a 21st century society with and for children: follow-up to the European strategy for Children (Recommendation 1286 (1996))
- Recommendation 1545 (2002) on a campaign against trafficking in women
- Recommendation 1532 (2001) on a dynamic social policy for children and adolescents in towns and cities
- Recommendation 1526 (2001) on a campaign against trafficking in minors to put a stop to the east European route: the example of Moldova
- Recommendation 1523 (2001) on domestic slavery
- Recommendation 1501 (2001) on parents and teachers' responsibilities in children's education
- Recommendation 1460 (2000) on setting up a European ombudsman for children
- Recommendation 1459 (2000): Action plan for the children of Kosovo

- Recommendation 1449 (2000) on clandestine migration from the south of the Mediterranean into Europe
- Recommendation 1443 (2000) on international adoption: respecting children's rights
- Recommendation 1398 (1999) on the situation of children in Albania
- Recommendation 1371 (1998) on abuse and neglect of children
- Recommendation 1336 (1997) on combating child labour exploitation as a matter of priority
- Recommendation 1286 (1996) on a European strategy for children
- Recommendation 1121 (1990) on the rights of children



- Resolution 1579 (2007): Prostitution – which stance to take?
- Resolution 1537 (2007) on a future for children infected with HIV/Aids and Aids orphans
- Resolution 1530 (2007) on child victims: stamping out all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse
- Resolution 1587 (2007) on the situation of children living in post-conflict zones in the Balkans
- Resolution 1337 (2003) on migration connected with trafficking in women and prostitution

- Resolution 1307 (2002) on sexual exploitation of children: zero tolerance
- Resolution 1291 (2002) on international abduction of children by one of the parents
- Resolution 1247 (2001) on female genital mutilation
- Resolution 1215 (2000) on the campaign against the enlistment of child soldiers and their participation in armed conflicts
- Resolution 1212 (2000) on rape in armed conflicts
- Resolution 1099 (1996) on the sexual exploitation of children

#### ***IV. Recommendations and resolutions from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe***

- Recommendation 135 (2003) on local partnerships for preventing and combating violence at school
- Recommendation 53 (1999) on policies for deprived children/adolescents and families



- Resolution 160 (2003) on local partnership for preventing and combating violence at school
- Resolution 74 (1999) on policies for deprived children/adolescents and families



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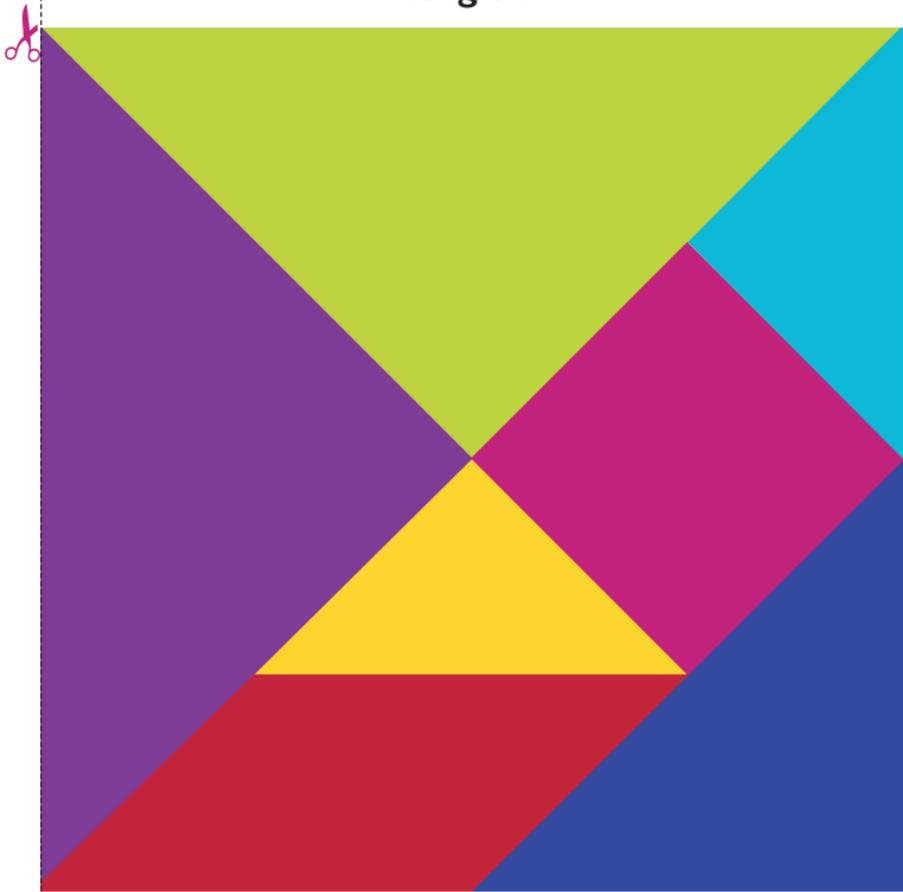
WITH

CHILDREN

## Build with us!

The graphics for the programme “Building a Europe for and with children” are inspired by the tangram. The tangram is a Chinese thinking game, similar to a puzzle. The idea is to make shapes out of seven standard pieces: five triangles – two large ones, one medium sized and two smaller ones – plus a square and a parallelogram. At first glance, making shapes seems simple, but after a few tries, you might change your mind! If you have never played this game before, try reproducing the illustrations in this booklet using the cut-outs on the opposite page. If you can't do it, ask a child to help you, or look at the solutions on pages 35 and 36.

# Tangram



# Tangram



# Solutions

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# Solutions

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## **Co-ordination unit**

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